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STATE FOR NEA/ARN, NEA/PA, NEA/AIA, INR/NESA, R/MR,
I/GNEA, B/BXN, B/BRN, NEA/PPD, NEA/IPA FOR ALTERMAN
USAID/ANE/MEA
LONDON FOR TSOU
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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: SPECIAL MEDIA REACTION ON ZARQAWI

Editorial Commentary

-- "What after Zarqawi?"

Jordanian nationalist writer Abdullah Abou Rumman writes on the op-ed page of semi-official, influential Arabic daily Al-Rai: "The end of Zarqawi clearly signals the end of Al-Qaeda's era in Iraq. His non-Iraqi followers will now seek individually escape routes that save them from arrest or death. This starts a new challenge, because Arab governments and intelligence agencies know very little about these individuals. They have high fighting ability, they are ideologically charged, and they are antagonistic, they are trained in urban warfare, but most dangerously, they are unknown. A decade and a half ago, the return of the Arab Afghans presented enough problems, and they were known, if only because of the visas stamped on their passports, besides the fact that their training was in open warfare. Resisting the danger posed by the return of Al-Qaeda's fighters from Iraq will require a joint effort by governments, civil society institutions, and religious organizations, which need to rehabilitate them through changing the discourse and bridging the gap between government and the people."

-- "One battle against terror has been won"

Chief Editor Ayman Al-Safadi writes on the back-page of centrist, independent Arabic daily Al-Ghad: "Zarqawi fell, but it remains for us to fell the phenomenon of Zarqawi or the bigger Zarqawi, which is the specious ideology by which he lived. This will be a hard battle, but an inevitable one for defeating terror."

-- "May the martyrs of the hotels rest in peace"

An op-ed signed by "The Editor" of semi-official, influential Arabic daily Al-Rai intoned: "Our battle with terror, its symbols and its discourse is not over. But the end of Zarqawi, the way it happened, must be a lesson to terrorists that they would not escape their just punishment."

-- "Zarqawi is dead, but what of the Zarqawists?"

Regular commentator and Amman correspondent for the pan-Arab satellite channel Al-Jazeera Yasser Abou Hilaleh observed in an analysis in centrist, independent Arabic daily Al-Ghad: "Zarqawi expected this end and actually sought it. This is why his favorite house, to which he returned frequently, was right across the street from a cemetery, with the narrow street drawing a thin line separating life from death. Now Zarqawi is dead, but the factors that created the phenomenon of Zarqawi are still active."

-- "After Zarqawi. has the danger to Jordan vanished?"

Columnist Fahed Al-Khitian writes on the inside page of independent, mass-appeal Arabic daily Al-Arab Al-Yawm concluded: "Observers believe that Jordan's indirect participation in the killing of Zarqawi will push Al-Qaeda to continue their attempts to penetrate this country with terrorist operations. Others believe that the disappearance of Zarqawi, with the special enmity that he bore to the Jordanian state will minimize the chances of Jordan being targeted. But the end of Zarqawi does not necessarily mean the end of the organization in Iraq or in Jordan, and consequently the role of Jordan in the fight against terror will continue, now that it has become an end in itself, and a basis of the state's local and regional discourse."

-- "Mistakes!"

Columnist Nahed Hattar writes on the back-page of independent, mass-appeal Arabic daily Al-Arab Al-Yawm: "It would be appropriate to remember that the party that killed Zarqawi is itself terrorist, but with enormous capabilities. It is responsible, through its occupation of Iraq, for the political and security state of chaos in that country, which became a haven for Al-Qaeda after the occupation not before it. We must not forget that the American occupiers also kill civilians on a large scale, bomb weddings, and carry out massacres. What, then is the difference between Bush the Little and Abu Mus'ab Al-zarqawi? Only in his resources. Otherwise he is also a religious extremist and a beheader. Jordanian public opinion, which is united against terror, is divided regarding the operation not regarding its result, but because it is American."

-- "Zarqawi outside the game; what about his network?"

Columnist Mohammad Abu Romman writes on the op-ed page of centrist, independent Arabic daily Al-Ghad: "With the killing of Abu Musab Zarqawi, the curtain fell on the life of a person who was very controversial and who raised so many questions in the Arab and international cultural, political and media arenas. Yet, the fact that Zarqawi is now out of the security game in Iraq and the region does not mean that the role of his network, which he established in just a few years, is over. A great number of analysts and researchers are skeptical about the power of Zarqawi and his network and believe that there was a deliberate exaggeration by the western media to make this network a coat hanger for clarifying or justifying the American security and political failure following the downfall of the Saddam regime. In truth, this approach of belittling this network and its activities is completely wrong. The main thing that explains the record time in which this network has risen is the nature of circumstances that accompanied the fall of the Saddam regime. There had been hundreds of Arab volunteers who remained in Iraq, and the Zarqawi group, which was limited at the time, was the only party that could accommodate them.. The Sunni community provided a safe haven for the group, because that community felt the danger and picked up

on the many messages from Shiite powers and from the American occupation that the Sunnis are going to be the main loser from the new developments. The exclusion - or lack of participation - of the Sunnis in the political process played a major role in providing Zarqawi with Iraqi supporters and members.. The main question that begs itself now is what is the fate of his network now that Zarqawi is gone? On the domestic Iraqi front, there are major challenges that face the network . most importantly the relationship with the Sunni community.. One of the other issues that face Al-Qaeda is how unified is the organization after Zarqawi's death.. Regionally, it is evident that the headquarters of Al-Qaeda on the global level has moved, of late, of middle Asia to the Middle East and in Iraq specifically.. This regional activity is going to be affected in the short term by Zarqawi's killing and will become weak until the organization adapts to the new changes inside Iraq. One of the lead countries to benefit from Zarqawi's killing is Jordan. The new leader will most likely be an Iraqi who does not have any historical problems with Jordan as Zarqawi had.. Reading the future of Al-Qaeda, one must stress the fact that the flourishing and growth of these groups did not come from a vacuum, but was the product of the current general crisis. As long as the political, economic and cultural situation stays deteriorated, and as long there is foreign aggression and domestic helplessness to face up to it, there will always be opportunity for thousands of Zarqawis to surface."

-- "The uninnocent timing"

Columnist Khairallah Khairallah writes on the op-ed page of centrist, independent Arabic daily Al-Ghad: "Abu Musab Zarqawi's end was more than normal. It is the end of anyone who takes up terrorism and kills in the name of religion. Abu Musab Zarqawi could not but get what was coming to him for all that he has done to women and children and all that he has done to his country Jordan. Yet, one must ask: Is getting rid of him the beginning of the end of the civil war that Iraq has entered? Or is the assassination of the number one terrorist in Iraq just another chapter of this civil war and that it was time to get rid of the man who has completed his assigned tasks of stirring sectarianism that lead to the civil war and provide it with the necessary fuel? Going back to Zarqawi's speeches, he came across as an almost illiterate man. Could someone of this caliber lead the battle against the American occupation of Iraq? Could there be a logical explanation for the admiration that shown to him by many Arabs? Or is the only logical explanation of this phenomenon lies in the fact that the Arab failure has exceeded all expectation and a hero had to be found even if he was an exceptional terrorist in the crime field.. No doubt, the American occupation bears huge responsibility for what has transpired in Iraq. No sane person can forget that the Americans plants the seeds of sectarianism in Iraq when they linked the preparation to war with the access of the Shiite majority to authority.. Does Zarqawi's death benefit the Americans in any way? Does it benefit Iraq and the Iraqis? The answer to that question is still hard to find."

-- "Let them shed their masks. Are they with our country or against it?"

An op-ed signed by "The Editor" appeared in semi-official, influential Arabic daily Al-Rai (06/10), commenting on the Deputies' visit of condolence to the Zarqawi house: "Shocking and vexing is this act of defiance by representatives of the Islamic Action Front against their countrymen who have not forgotten and who will not forget the blood of the innocent victims who fell victim to the explosive belts of Abu

Mus'ab, a crime to which he claimed responsibility as documented in voice and image. The Islamic Action Front and its Deputies should decide now whether they are with this country, its interests, and its people, or whether they are on the side of violence and terror, on the side of the enemies of the Ummah and its noble religion."

-- "Why have you sided with the murderer and stabbed the martyrs?"

Daily columnist Sultan Hattab writes on the op-ed page of semi-official, influential Arabic daily Al-Rai: "Those who traveled to Zarqa to pay condolences on the death of Zarqawi: Shame on you for stabbing us in the back in the name of condolences, for a criminal who was wanted shocking crimes! You would have done better to console and comfort the families of the martyrs in Amman who fell victim to his crimes, because they did not stab this country and did not kill innocent people whether by beheading them or by sending explosive belts to blow up the innocent. We call in the name of Jordan that these people should be exposed in public and held accountable within and outside Parliament."

-- "The keys to heaven and specious fatwas"

Semi-official, influential Arabic daily Al-Rai (06/11) editorializes: "We are really disappointed to see the Deputies of the Islamic Action Front deliberately and with premeditation go against the will of the people and the higher interest of their country. Deputy Mohammad Abou Faris yesterday came out with his 'revolutionary fatwa' to say that it is chaotic to describe the victims of the Amman explosions as martyrs. With full confidence he presumed to judge that these innocent victims who did not commit any crime nor an act that angers God, deserve the death ordained upon them by the 'great mujahid' Abu Mus'ab Al-Zarqawi. Where is Abu Faris and the Islamic Action Front taking us, disavowing the most basic human right that is upheld by Islam? We did not expect to reach this level of callousness regarding the blood of the innocent, and we must not remain silent because what Abu Faris said does not come under freedom of expression. Why does the Islamic Action Front remain silent, and why do we not hear any of his associates condemn such a statement? It is high time that these people who defy the sentiments of their people, turn their back on the teachings of Islam, dispense keys to heaven, learned that specious teachings will not help them because the people of Jordan will not forget and will not forgive. Your eminence, you have shed your mask."

-- "Justifying terrorism"

Chief Editor Ayman Safadi writes on the back-page of centrist, independent Arabic daily Al-Ghad: "The Islamic movement bears a great responsibility in standing up to the Takfiri groups that defame values of Islam and to the terrorist practices that contradict Islam's teachings.. Yet, the movement has not so far risen to level of that undertaking. On the contrary, some of its representatives adopt a political rhetoric that tries to justify the crimes of Takfiris and take the side of terrorists and the crimes they have committed against people and religion. This is a stand that cannot be accepted from a movement that is supposed to represent rationality and moderation among the religion-based political movements. It is not enough for the movement to say that an action, like that when three of its parliamentary representatives offered their condolences to the family of the leader of terrorism in Iraq Abu Musab Zarqawi, is an individual action that does not represent it. The visit was offensive

to the feelings of Jordanians and to the blood of martyrs who died in the terrorist operation for which Zarqawi declared responsibility so proudly.. The Islamic movement is required to declare a clear and categorical stand about terrorists and terrorism. There is no room for fooling around or silence about the instigation.. The least it can do is lift its sponsorship of them and declare clearly that it rejects their heresy, Zarqawi and his ideology of unjustifiable terror."

-- "Zarqawi and employing the television image"

Daily columnist Rakan Majali writes on the back-page of center-left, influential Arabic daily Ad-Dustour: "The Americans depended in their war on Iraq on symbolism through images.. Right in the first few weeks of the America's occupation of Iraq, we noticed that the American, international, and Arab media exaggerated the image of a person called Abu Musab Zarqawi, the leader of Al-Qaeda organization in Iraq, who became more famous than Bin Laden and who became the first symbol for igniting the violence in Iraq.. Zarqawi was a symbol for a stage that started since the beginning of the occupation of Iraq until his death three days ago. No doubt his image was fattened and blown up so that the American victory would be worthwhile and the media employment of it would be effective, particularly in the American public opinion. The closest thing to reality is that Zarqawi's role has finished. More importantly, the game has entered a new stage, and we must wait to see what new television images will be employed."

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